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ABSTRACT

An adapted version of the Minnesota Satisfaction Questionnaire was used to collect data regarding three types of job satisfaction: general, intrinsic, and extrinsic among high school assistant principals in Mississippi. Forty-nine percent of the 245 assistant principals surveyed participated in the study. Results indicated a high degree of general, intrinsic, and extrinsic job satisfaction among the assistant principals. No statistically significant relationships were revealed between job satisfaction and two specific variables: (1) length of time worked as an assistant principal; and (2) student enrollment. However, findings mildly suggested that the fewer years worked as an assistant principal, the less the job satisfaction. Assistant principals most liked working with students, teachers, staff, and parents. They disliked student discipline, incompetent teachers, difficult parents, support staff who behaved unprofessionally, heavy workloads, and the many after-school duties assigned. The most frequently mentioned responsibilities assistant principals would add to their jobs include curriculum and instruction tasks, personnel functions, and business matters such as working with the school's budget. (DFR)

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JOB SATISFACTION AMONG HIGH SCHOOL ASSISTANT PRINCIPALS

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Abstract: This paper is based on a study of job satisfaction among high school assistant principals in Mississippi. An adapted version of the Minnesota Satisfaction Questionnaire (MSQ) was used to collect data regarding three types of job satisfaction: general, intrinsic, and extrinsic. Forty-nine percent of the 245 assistant principals surveyed participated in the study. Results indicated a high degree of general, intrinsic, and extrinsic job satisfaction among the assistant principals. No statistically significant relationships were revealed between job satisfaction and two specific variables examined in the study: (a) length of time worked as an assistant principal, and (b) student enrollment. However, the findings mildly suggested that the less years worked as an assistant principal, the less the job satisfaction; the more years, the greater the job satisfaction. Assistant principals liked working with students, teachers, staff, and parents most about their jobs. They liked student discipline least.

Presented at the Annual Meeting of the
Mid-South Educational Research Association

Bowling Green, Kentucky
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2

Researchers have studied the topic of job satisfaction in the field of business and industry for many years. They have given little attention, however, to job satisfaction among assistant principals serving in elementary or secondary schools (Marshall, 1993).

This research paper is based on a dissertation study which investigated job satisfaction among high school assistant principals in Mississippi (Chen, 2000). In particular, the study addressed: (a) general, intrinsic, and extrinsic job satisfaction; (b) relationships between job satisfaction and length of time worked as an assistant principal; (c) relationships between job satisfaction and school size as defined by student enrollment; (d) what assistant principals like most and least about their jobs; and (e) what responsibilities assistant principals would add or delete from their jobs.

That researchers have neglected the views of assistant principals on job satisfaction is unfortunate because these educators are expected to carry out important administrative work such as monitoring student attendance, handling student discipline, and supervising student activities. According to Hartzell, William, and Nelson (1995), assistant principals participate in tasks that include:

> Accounting for student attendance, directing student activities or athletics, supervising and evaluating certificated or noncertificated staff, overseeing guidance, planning and implementing staff development, supervising the activities of selected departments or programs, designing the master schedule, coordinating transportation, and managing the plant and facilities. (p. 22)

Getting a handle on what assistant principals actually do, however, is difficult because job roles differ according to school size, level, and location.

Calabrese (1991) studied the role of the assistant principal from a historic perspective and found that it changed through time: from passive to active, from single to multi-dimensional, from assistant to co-principal, and from apprentice to colleague. He also found that assistant principals have heavy workloads, have little time to meet

their family obligations, and often have few opportunities for professional development.

Research Design

A descriptive research design was used in conducting the study. The population studied consisted of 245 assistant principals employed in Mississippi high schools during the 1998-1999 school year. Forty-nine percent of the assistant principals participated in the study.

The short-form of the Minnesota Satisfaction Questionnaire (MSQ) was the primary instrument used to collect data. Developed by Weiss, Dawis, England, and Lofquist (1977), the instrument is designed to measure employee satisfaction in relation to several different aspects of the work environment.

The MSQ stemmed from the theoretical views of Dawis, England and Lofguist (1969) who developed a theory referred to as "work adjustment." According to their theory, work is an interaction between an individual and the environment. The individual develops skills to cope with an environment requiring certain tasks to be performed. As the individual interacts with the work environment, his responses become associated with reinforcers that influence behavior. Those in turn evolve into a set of values which provide the foundation for the individual's work personality. Work adjustment is the process by which an individual seeks to achieve tasks and come to terms with the work environment.

Descriptive statistics were used to analyze data collected regarding the degree of job satisfaction among high school assistant principals. Responses to each of the 20 items on the MSQ were tabulated and described in terms of frequencies (i.e., number of respondents selecting a specific response) and percents. The instrument's five-point scale permitted five choices: "very dissatisfied," "dissatisfied," "neither satisfied nor dissatisfied," "satisfied," or "very satisfied."

The *Pearson product moment correlation coefficient*, a widely accepted statistical test, was used for to determine the relationship between the length of time worked as an assistant principal and each of three job satisfaction factors: (a) general, (b) intrinsic, and (c) extrinsic. Pearson's test was also used to determine whether there was a relationship between the size of the school as measured by student enrollment and each of three job satisfaction factors (a) general, (b) intrinsic, and (c) extrinsic. Significance was set at a .05 alpha level.

As defined by Weiss, Dawis, England, and Lofquist (1977), general job satisfaction is an indicator that represents the individual worker's appraisal of his satisfaction or dissatisfaction with the work environment. Intrinsic job satisfaction stem from the individual's relationship to the work itself, while extrinsic job satisfaction is dependent on factors such as company policies, supervision, interpersonal relations, working conditions, salary, and benefits rather than the nature of the work itself. Research, however, has yielded little data to suggest that intrinsic and extrinsic factors are mutually exclusive. They may be, in fact, inherently intertwined.

Chen (2000), using a questionnaire, investigated what the assistant principals (a) like and dislike about the job and (b) responsibilities they would add or delete. Data were analyzed using qualitative means such as establishing emerging themes in relation to recurring regularities. Descriptive statistics were used to organize, summarize, and present demographic data. Demographic data pertained to (a) gender, (b) work history, (c) degrees earned, and (d) student enrollment.

A major limitation of Chen's study is its reliance on self-reported information. The respondents may have given socially acceptable rather than objective responses to the questions. Since the study involved only assistant principals working in Mississippi high schools, caution should be exercised in generalizing the results beyond the boundaries of Mississippi.

Findings and Conclusions

According to demographic data collected, the assistant principals who participated in the study were predominately male, relatively inexperienced as administrators, and held advanced degrees. The majority of the respondents were administrators for five or less years and held master's degrees. School size was closely divided between those with enrollments under 1,000 students and those with a 1,000 or more students.

The findings indicated high job satisfaction. Over 75% of the respondents rated 17 of the 20 statements on the MSQ as either "satisfied" or "very satisfied." Only three statements received a lower response. The only statement that received less than a 50% positive rating was the one addressing salary and amount of work expected. No statement received a high negative rating signifying dissatisfaction. Intrinsic satisfaction was equally high, with 75% of the assistant principals rating 11 of the 12 intrinsic statements "satisfied" or "very satisfied." The degree of extrinsic job satisfaction was also high, but less than intrinsic job satisfaction. Seventy-five percent of the assistant principals assigned a "satisfied" or "very satisfied" rating to 4 of the 6 statements measuring extrinsic satisfaction.

No statistically significant relationship was found between working five years or less as an assistant principal and job satisfaction. Also, no statistically significant relationship was found between school size and job satisfaction.

In regard to what high school assistant principals like or dislike about their jobs, they prefer:

1. Working in positive ways with students, teachers, parents, and staff.
2. Interacting with co-workers, teachers, and support staff members.
3. Doing a variety of duties.

They prefer least:

1. Student discipline--being responsible for handling student misbehavior and conferring with parents regarding the behavior of their children.

2. Incompetent teachers, difficult parents, and support staff members who behave unprofessionally.

3. Heavy workloads and the many after-school duties assigned.

The most frequently mentioned responsibilities assistant principals would add to their jobs:

1. Curriculum and instruction tasks.

2. Personnel functions.

3. Business matters such as working with the school's budget.

They would delete:

1. Student discipline and safety.

2. Student activities and athletics.

3. Supervision of the school parking lot and bus duty.

Based on the aforementioned findings, five conclusions are drawn regarding high school assistant principals in Mississippi:

1. They are satisfied with their jobs with the possible exception of salary and amount of work expected.

2. Job satisfaction and longevity in the job are not significantly related.

3. Job satisfaction and school size, as measured in terms of student enrollment, are not significantly related.

4. They like working with others and doing a variety of duties, but dislike student discipline, unprofessional teachers, heavy workloads, and after-school duties such as monitoring interscholastic athletics.

5. They would add curriculum and instruction, personnel, and business responsibilities to their jobs; they would delete responsibilities addressing student discipline, student activities, and athletics.

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